

IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF KEY REASONS FOR
THE UNDERVALUATION AND UNDERUTILIZATION OF PUBLIC
RELATIONS PROFESSION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

It is no longer in doubt that public Relations is an officially recognised profession in Nigeria. At least Decree No. 16 of 1990 gives this official recognition. But what is contestable is whether the profession is being utilized and valued as is the case with its contemporaries. This is what the study sets out to establish.

The researcher collected both primary and secondary data. It was discovered that the profession suffers underutilization and undervaluation for a number of factors which include the performance of the practitioners, lack of wholehearted commitment by the Nigerian Institute of public Relations to control entry requirement, enforcement of Decree 16 of 1990, lack of commitment on the part of government and lack of many institutions of higher learning offering courses, among others. However, the undervaluation and underutilization is more in government establishments which incidentally promulgated the relevant Decree on the practice of the profession. The situation in the private sector is a little encouraging.

The profession can be helped to occupy its rightful place by teaching of its courses in institutions of higher learning, implementation of Decree 16 of 1990 and practitioners trying harder to prove their worth. The regulatory body of the profession which is the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) must double its efforts in the quest for making the profession to be seen as a serious endeavour both from the view of practitioners and the society. As the popular saying goes "the bereaved must be seen to be mourning more than sympathizers". A stitch in time saves nine. Above all, a holistic approach must be adopted, with Government and the other stockholders.